

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GARAGE YOUTH CENTRE SCRUTINY PANEL
Tuesday 8th April 2025 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors C. L. Rackham, S. A. Shepherd and B. Thompson
Youth Option Representatives: Madeleine Durie and Mark Ford
The Town Clerk
P.A. to the Senior Leadership Team

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from L. E. Edwards. Their reasons for absence were reported and accepted.

2. **MINUTES** RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th October 2024 were approved as a true record.

3. **UPDATE ON PROVISION AND FACILITIES**

The Garage Team Leader updated Members on the following: -

- (a) The Garage now operates a Friday session and it was felt that this was key to the number of new young people attending. After the Easter break, the Garage would be open every evening Tuesday to Friday, with extended hours being considered.
- (b) During the six month period from October 2024 to the end of March 2025, 103 new young people had attended. It was stated that although some new attendees would only attend once or twice, the majority would continue to come on a regular basis.
- (c) It was reported that some young people attend straight from school, change, have a meal then stay all evening until closing.
- (d) The young people tended to come from the geographical areas around the local schools, but not many from further afield such as the Waterside.
- (e) Feedback on issues and themes is being sought and received on postcards from the attendees and this information is fed into the planning and delivery of future sessions regarding what the young people would like to see included. It was reported that bullying (especially in schools), Mental Health and Inclusivity/LGBTQ+ were recurrent themes. It was also reported that the young people really enjoyed the cookery sessions and self-organised games and sports were popular. Overall, the feedback received was very positive.
- (f) It was felt that a lot of the time, Youth Options were required to signpost other organisations, such as CAMHs, GPs, Kooth and Quit Smoking. Referrals to such organisations were by their nature unable to be followed up, but where possible, Youth Options would in order check that the young people were receiving support, eg safeguarding cases. In regard to one of the main issues, the question of having a knife amnesty was raised; however, it was felt that these would only serve to identify knife types which are being carried, and not the number of knives.
- (g) The Young Leaders programme was going well with three young people from the Garage attending a recent residential course with other young leaders from other centres. It was stated that the goal of the programme was to support young people who are potentially outgrowing the Garage, and also to make them ambassadors of other young people.